

RETAIL PRICES - SEPTEMBER QUARTER, 1950.All Items - "C" Series.

Index numbers of retail prices of all items ("C" Series) - with the weighted average of the six capital cities in 1923-1927 as base of 1000 - for the September quarter, 1950, with figures for June quarter, 1950, for comparison (in brackets), were:- Brisbane, 1482 (1446); Toowoomba, 1496 (1455); Rockhampton, 1497 (1461); Townsville, 1528 (1506); Bundaberg, 1471 (1437); and Warwick, 1474 (1432).

The rise in retail prices in Brisbane in the September quarter of 1950 (as measured by the "C" Series index number) was 2.5 per cent. Although this was the largest increase since the second quarter of 1949, it has been exceeded in four other quarters since the beginning of 1948. The latest rise brought the total rise in the twelve months ended September, 1950, to 8.7 per cent., but this was a smaller increase than in either of the two preceding twelve-monthly periods, when prices rose 10.1 per cent. in the twelve months to September, 1948, and 9.0 per cent. in the succeeding twelve months. Over half of the aggregate rise in the index number in the recent quarter was due to an increase in prices of food and groceries, which rose by 3.6 per cent. Clothing and footwear, on the other hand, showed a relatively small increase of 2.5 per cent., only three other quarters since the beginning of 1948 having shown smaller increases in this group of items. In four of the other five cities from which data are obtained, the increase in clothing and footwear prices was even less than in Brisbane, the smallest increase being in Bundaberg with 1.1 per cent. rise in this group. Like Brisbane, however, all five provincial cities included in the quarterly survey showed greater increases in food and grocery prices.

At the end of the war in 1945, Brisbane food prices were 13.2 per cent. and clothing prices 72.1 per cent. above pre-war level. Since then prices of commodities in both these sections of the index have risen by over 50 per cent., the food index being now 52.0 per cent. and the clothing index 57.7 per cent. above the June quarter of 1945, making them respectively 72.1 and 171.5 per cent. above the 1938-39 level.

The indexes show the following percentage increases when compared with those for the periods shown.

Retail Price Index, "C" Series, Percentage Increases, September Quarter, 1950.

City.	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From September Quarter, 1949.	From June Quarter, 1950.
	%	%	%
Brisbane	71.7	8.7	2.5
Toowoomba	75.8	8.6	2.8
Rockhampton	73.9	9.0	2.5
Townsville	67.5	7.8	1.5
Bundaberg	74.9	8.8	2.4
Warwick	79.3	7.5	2.9

Food and groceries, clothing and footwear, and the miscellaneous group of items comprising household drapery and hardware, fuel, light, fares, etc., have shown the following percentage changes during the last quarter and since 1938-39.

Retail Prices, Percentage Increases, September Quarter, 1950.

City.	Food and Groceries.		Clothing and Footwear.		Miscellaneous Items.	
	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From June Quarter, 1950.	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From June Quarter, 1950.	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From June Quarter, 1950.
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Brisbane	72.1	3.6	171.5	2.5	43.4	1.8
Toowoomba	82.6	3.1	170.7	2.2	41.9	4.8
Rockhampton	70.8	4.6	167.0	1.4	45.5	1.1
Townsville	64.2	2.0	169.0	1.8	44.5	1.0
Bundaberg	68.0	3.6	169.8	1.1	42.6	1.5
Warwick	76.2	3.3	170.2	2.5	43.8	3.4

Food and Rent (4 and 5 Roomed Houses).

As shown in the previous table, food prices increased, during the quarter, in the six cities included in the survey by amounts ranging from 2.0 per cent. in Townsville to 4.6 per cent. in Rockhampton. In Brisbane, dearer food prices accounted for more than half of the increase in the all items ("C" Series) index.

The rent index remained stationary in Townsville but increased in other cities by amounts ranging from 0.7 per cent. in Brisbane to 3.5 per cent. in Bundaberg.

Clothing, Footwear, and Miscellaneous Items.

Increases in the clothing and footwear index were due principally to higher prices of suits, trousers, woollen underclothing, and women's footwear.

Higher fares and increased charges for gas in Brisbane, Toowoomba, and Warwick were the chief causes of the increase in the miscellaneous items index.

Comparison of Costs in Queensland Cities.

The following table shows the amounts, for the various Queensland cities, required in September quarter, 1950, to purchase the quantity of goods or housing which would have cost £1 in Brisbane.

Amounts Required in Various Cities to Purchase Equivalent of £1 in Brisbane.

City.	All Items.			Food and Groceries.			Rent (4 and 5 Rooms).			Clothing and Footwear.			Miscellaneous Items.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Brisbane ..	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
Toowoomba ..	1	0	2 $\frac{1}{4}$	1	0	2	1	0	6	19	11 $\frac{1}{4}$	1	0	5 $\frac{1}{2}$	
Rockhampton ..	1	0	2 $\frac{1}{2}$	1	0	9	18	7 $\frac{1}{2}$		1	0	0 $\frac{1}{2}$	1	0	7 $\frac{1}{2}$
Townsville ..	1	0	7 $\frac{1}{2}$	1	1	3 $\frac{1}{2}$	19	7 $\frac{1}{4}$		1	0	1	1	1	1 $\frac{1}{2}$
Bundaberg ..	19	10 $\frac{1}{4}$		1	0	7 $\frac{1}{4}$	16	2 $\frac{1}{2}$		1	0	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	1	0	8 $\frac{1}{2}$
Warwick ..	19	10 $\frac{3}{4}$		1	0	3	17	8		19	9 $\frac{3}{4}$		1	1	1 $\frac{1}{2}$

In relation to Brisbane prices, the cost of all items together increased, during the quarter, in Toowoomba and Warwick, but decreased in Townsville and Bundaberg, and in Rockhampton retained its same relativity to Brisbane for the second successive quarter. Although prices remained highest in Townsville, they came closer to Brisbane prices than in the previous quarter. Warwick was replaced by Bundaberg as the cheapest city among the six for which the comparison is available. In Bundaberg, goods costing 19s. 10 $\frac{1}{4}$ d. would have cost £1 in Brisbane.

Food and grocery prices in provincial cities remained dearer than in Brisbane. The excess over Brisbane prices increased in Rockhampton and Bundaberg but decreased in the other three cities for which the index number is calculated.

Except in Toowoomba, where the saving in £1 increased from 4d. to 5d., prices of clothing and footwear in the provincial cities came nearer to the Brisbane prices. In these cities, amounts which would have been paid for clothing and footwear costing £1 in Brisbane varied from a saving of 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ d. to an excess of 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.

Prices of miscellaneous items were dearer than Brisbane prices in other cities. Largest variation recorded since the previous quarter was in Toowoomba where miscellaneous items costing £1 in Brisbane would have cost £1 0s. 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ d., compared with 19s. 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. during the June quarter, mainly because of an increase in the charge for gas.

State Basic Wage Rates in Various Cities.

The first column of the following table shows, for the September quarter of 1950, the retail price index number ("C" Series) for Brisbane, for four of the other principal cities of Queensland for which figures are available, and for the other five Capital Cities of Australia. The next two columns show the current basic wage rates, for males and females, as prescribed by the appropriate State industrial authorities, for each city at the middle of the September quarter. These columns are followed by columns showing the amounts which would have been required in Brisbane to provide a standard of real purchasing power equivalent to that provided by the respective State basic wages in each of the cities shown. The differences between these amounts and the actual State basic wage rates for Brisbane, as shown in the final columns, show the margin of advantage in purchasing power enjoyed by Brisbane basic wage earners over basic wage earners in each of the other cities. Minus (-) figures in the last columns indicate that the local basic wage in a particular city provided a higher level of real purchasing power than did the Brisbane basic wage in Brisbane. Thus, males and females in Townsville, and, to a less extent, in Bundaberg, and males in Perth, enjoyed a basic wage which provided more purchasing power than the corresponding Brisbane wage did. In all other cases, males and females received a lower real basic wage than in Brisbane.

Comparison of Purchasing Powers of Basic Wages of State Industrial Authorities,
September Quarter, 1950.

City.	Retail Price Index ("C" Series), 3rd Qtr., 1950.	Basic Wage at 15.8.50.		Equivalent of Local Basic Wage at Brisbane Prices.		Extra Purchasing Power of Brisbane Basic Wage.	
		Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.
		£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
Brisbane ..	1482	6 16 0	4 5 6	6 16 0	4 5 6	-	-
Toowoomba	1496	6 16 0	4 5 6	6 14 9	4 4 8	1 3	0 10
Rockhampton	1497	6 16 0	4 5 6	6 14 8	4 4 8	1 4	0 10
Townsville	1528	7 6 0	4 10 6	7 1 7	4 7 9	-5 7	-2 3
Bundaberg	1471	6 16 0	4 5 6	6 17 0	4 6 2	-1 0	-0 8
Sydney ..	1613	7 2 0	3 16 6	6 10 6	3 10 3	5 6	15 3
Melbourne	1569	7 0 0	a	6 12 3	a	3 9	a
Adelaide	1527	6 14 0	3 13 2	6 10 1	3 11 0	5 11	14 6
Perth ..	1547	7 3 6	3 17 6	6 17 6	3 14 3	-1 6	11 3
Hobart ..	1547	6 15 0	a	6 9 4	a	6 8	a

^a No State wage is declared. As the Commonwealth rate is followed to a large extent, the Commonwealth rate is shown for males, but it is not possible to show a rate for females which varies in different awards.

Commonwealth and State Basic Wage Rates.

Following the publication of the index numbers for the September quarter, 1950, the basic wage of the Commonwealth Court was automatically adjusted from 1st November, 1950. The new rates and the amounts of adjustments are shown in the next table, together with the latest basic wage rates for males and females declared by the various State industrial authorities, and the dates from which they operated.

Basic Wage Rates, November, 1950.

Capital City.	Commonwealth Basic Wage.			State Basic Wage.			Date of Operation.
	Males. ^a	Increase on Previous Quarter.	Males.	Females.			
Brisbane ..	£ 6 15 0	s. 3 0	£ 6 19 0	£ 4 7 6			30.10.50
Sydney ..	7 6 0	4 0	7 6 0	3 19 0			1.11.50
Melbourne	7 3 0	3 0	(7 3 0)	a			(1.11.50) ^b
Adelaide ..	6 17 0	3 0	6 17 0	3 14 11			1.11.50
Perth ..	6 19 0	3 0	7 6 6	3 19 1			23.10.50
Hobart ..	6 19 0	4 0	(6 19 0)	a			(1.11.50) ^b

^a Female rates vary from 54 to 75 per cent. of the male rate.

^b No State wage declared, but rate shown is that of Commonwealth Court which is followed to a large extent.

On 12th October, the Commonwealth Arbitration Court declared that the Commonwealth basic wage for males would be increased by £1 per week and that the female rate would be 75 per cent. of the male rate. On 24th October, the Court announced that, when applying this increase, existing "prosperity" loadings would be increased, where necessary, to a uniform amount of 6s. per week. The effect was to give an additional increase in the basic wage of 2s. in Adelaide, Perth, and Hobart. It was also announced that the new wage rates would come into operation from the first pay period in December, when the respective rates for males would be:- Brisbane, £7.15.0; Sydney, £8.6.0; Melbourne, £8.3.0; Adelaide, £7.19.0; Perth, £8.1.0; and Hobart, £8.1.0; with 75 per cent. of these rates for females. The hearing of applications for an increased basic wage was commenced by the State Industrial Court on 23rd October, 1950.

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BRISBANE.

14th November, 1950.

Table No. 1 - The "All Items" Retail Prices Index - "C" Series.

(Base: Weighted Average of Six Capital Cities, 1923-1927 = 1000.)

City.	Year Ended June, 1939.	Year Ended June, 1946.	Year Ended Sept., 1950.	Quarter Ended -				
				Sept., 1949.	Decr., 1949.	March, 1950.	June, 1950.	Sept., 1950.
Brisbane ..	863	1079	1434	1364	1393	1414	1446	1482
Toowoomba ..	851	1092	1447	1377	1408	1429	1455	1496
Rockhampton ..	861	1084	1446	1373	1399	1428	1461	1497
Townsville ..	912	1119	1487	1418	1444	1469	1506	1528
Bundaberg ..	841	1059	1421	1352	1374	1401	1437	1471
Weighted Average								
Five Towns ..	864	1082	1439	1368	1397	1419	1451	1487
Warwick ..	822	1073	1426	1371	1390	1406	1432	1474

Table No. 2 - Food and Groceries Retail Prices Index.

(Base: Weighted Average of Six Capital Cities, 1923-1927 = 1000.)

City.	Year Ended June, 1939.	Year Ended June, 1946.	Year Ended Sept., 1950.	Quarter Ended -				
				Sept., 1949.	Decr., 1949.	March, 1950.	June, 1950.	Sept., 1950.
Brisbane ..	856	971	1416	1329	1367	1402	1421	1473
Toowoomba ..	814	1010	1431	1359	1379	1418	1441	1486
Rockhampton ..	895	1012	1457	1373	1391	1444	1462	1529
Townsville ..	955	1057	1517	1437	1463	1499	1537	1568
Bundaberg ..	903	1027	1453	1382	1393	1438	1464	1517
Weighted Average								
Five Towns ..	864	984	1428	1343	1377	1414	1435	1485
Warwick ..	846	1000	1436	1366	1388	1422	1444	1491

Table No. 3 - Clothing and Footwear Retail Prices Index.

(Base: Weighted Average of Six Capital Cities, 1923-1927 = 1000.)

City.	Year Ended June, 1939.	Year Ended June, 1946.	Year Ended Sept., 1950.	Quarter Ended -				
				Sept., 1949.	Decr., 1949.	March, 1950.	June, 1950.	Sept., 1950.
Brisbane ..	829	1454	2155	2010	2072	2099	2197	2251
Toowoomba ..	829	1429	2161	2001	2089	2116	2195	2244
Rockhampton ..	845	1477	2173	2019	2086	2124	2225	2256
Townsville ..	840	1457	2174	2017	2091	2124	2221	2260
Bundaberg ..	839	1447	2182	2018	2096	2128	2239	2264
Weighted Average								
Five Towns ..	831	1454	2159	2011	2076	2105	2202	2252
Warwick ..	825	1441	2144	2032	2077	2093	2175	2229